

ENLISTED CAREER NOTES



TRAINING FOR PROMOTIONS

Because the courses in the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) are linked to promotion, commanders must see that their soldiers are scheduled for and attend the appropriate schools.

As a result of Operation DESERT STORM, many soldiers had to be deferred from attending the courses they need, and it will take about a year to clear this backlog. PERSCOM needs the support of all commanders in allowing their soldiers to attend the critical courses, including those who redeployed following DESERT STORM.

Scheduling soldiers to attend combat arms NCOES courses is a decentralized procedure. Each major command is responsible for establishing a priority list for training. As the Order of Merit List (OML) is created, the soldiers in the primary zone for promotion selection must be placed at the top of the list.

Scheduling for combat support and combat service support Basic NCO Course (BNCOC) attendance is handled through the BNCOC Automated Reservation System (BARS) report. The priority for scheduling is staff sergeant, sergeant (promotable), and sergeant.

This priority system will ensure that each soldier receives training at the proper time and that no soldier is denied a promotion opportunity.

All soldiers who were denied training because of Operation DESERT STORM

have been identified and will be monitored to ensure timely scheduling for training. To ensure that soldiers are scheduled when they are redeployed, commanders at all levels must notify PERSCOM when these soldiers are available for training.

Soldiers deferred from attending the Advanced NCO Course (ANCOC) and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Course (USASMC) have been identified and will be scheduled for the first available classes after their redeployment. Installation officials must notify PERSCOM of the availability of their soldiers.

Soldiers in the zone of consideration for promotion to sergeant first class and master sergeant who were deferred from attending the prerequisite NCOES course solely because of Operation DESERT STORM will be identified to the appropriate selection board.

SOME AERs ARE NOW SEPARATE EVALUATIONS

Academic Evaluation Reports (AERs) received for permanent-change-of-station (PCS) schools of 20 weeks or longer for NCOs, sergeants through command sergeants major, have always been filed on their official military personnel files (OMPF). But these AERs were not included in the time accounting sequence with NCO evaluation reports (NCO-ERs).

This meant that the long period of time an NCO spent in one of these

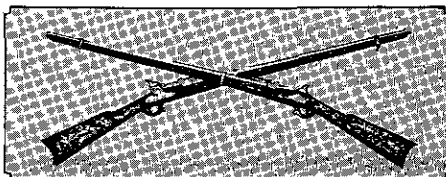
schools had to be reflected as non-rated time on his next evaluation report. Depending on the length of the school, leave taken, and the like, he might have to be given an annual evaluation report within three months after arriving at his new duty station or unit.

Effective with classes that graduated in January 1991, the AERs for these long-term schools will still be filed in the NCOs' OMPFs, but will be processed in sequence with their NCO-ERs. This means that an NCO's next NCO-ER period begins after his graduation from the school, not the month after his last NCO-ER. The AER will stand as a separate evaluation period between his last and his next NCO-ER.

This change will give raters a longer period of time to observe an NCO's performance before preparing his next NCO-ER. It will also give the rated NCO a more meaningful rating period in which to learn and grow, and demonstrate his abilities.

AERs received for temporary duty courses and PCS schools of less than 20 weeks will not count as separate evaluation periods and will continue to be reflected as non-rated time on the next NCO-ER.

Details and procedures are in MILPER message number 91-58, Processing Academic Evaluation Reports. This change will also be included in the next update of AR 623-1, Academic Evaluation Reporting System, and AR 623-205, Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Reporting System.



OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



WHERE DO I STAND? SENIOR RATER PROFILE

One of the questions most frequently asked of Infantry Branch is "How do I really stack up against my peers?" In virtually every case, the officer asks this question because he has no idea what his senior rater's profile is. In a few cases, the officer doesn't understand the center of mass concept or that a profile of the senior rater's cumulative block checks is applied on the back of each OER when it arrives at PERSCOM.

An officer's standing is determined by his position in the senior rater profile. The center of mass concept is based on the assumption that within a given population of officers, there is a majority of relatively equal performers (center of mass), a few whose performance is clearly better than that of the majority (above center of mass), and a few others whose performance is clearly not as good as that of the majority (below center of mass).

It is the senior rater who is responsible for making this tough call, and he does so by creating a profile of the officers he rates. This profile reflects his evaluation of the individual officers' potential and performance. A perfect bell curve profile doesn't magically appear the minute a battalion commander prepares a senior rating for one of his officers. His senior rater profile develops over time, as he rates more and more officers. This is why some profiles have very few officers in them. In these cases the profiles are considered "immature," and the senior rater's narrative becomes the critical item in conveying his evaluation of an officer's standing. Ideally, after several ratings, his profile matures into one that clearly portrays whether an officer he rates is running with, behind, or ahead of the pack.

An officer who wants to find out

what his current senior rater's profile looks like should either contact the adjutant, who may keep track of it, or ask the senior rater himself. Additionally, personnel technicians at Infantry Branch can provide information by telephone on an officer's latest three OERs. This subject is also one that makes a worthwhile topic for officer professional development — one that is guaranteed to keep the attention of the audience.

Finding out where you stand in previous senior rater profiles is as simple as requesting a copy of your performance microfiche. To request yours, write to Headquarters, PERSCOM, ATTN: TAPC-MSR-S, Alexandria, VA 22332. Along with your request, include your rank, name, Social Security number (SSN), and mailing address. You should receive the microfiche in about three weeks.

Another topic worth mentioning is your responsibility for reviewing each OER before signing it to make sure it is administratively correct. It is imperative that you make sure your name and SSN as well as those of your rater and senior rater are correct. Also verify your duty title and description, your height and weight figures (they should match those on your ORB), and the data on your Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT).

A special note to officers who are promotable: If the rank indicated in Part I.c of your OER has a "P" after it, the profile for the next higher grade will be applied to the report. Rated officers and senior raters need to be certain that the intent is to have the profile for the next higher grade applied to a report if there is a "P" after the rated officer's rank.

Your senior rater's profile is probably the key element in determining where you stand with respect to your peers. If you have further questions regarding

profiles, their interpretation, or your standing in a profile or overall, please call your assignment officer.

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Promotion and selection boards review three items in each officer's file — his officer record brief (ORB), his microfiche, and his photograph. A recent, high quality photo is extremely important; it is an officer's handshake with the board. Nevertheless, there is a continuing problem with the quality and timeliness of the photos in officers' files.

As strange as it may seem, photos have arrived at PERSCOM with such errors as the following: U.S. and crossed rifles switched on the lapels, and officers wearing jump boots, grossly wrinkled uniforms, and even overshoes.

While these are the extremes, more than 40 percent of the photos could be better. The most common errors are green leadership tabs, the Infantry cord, incorrect wear of awards and decorations (uneven, not properly placed), improper fit or appearance of uniform (wrinkled, too small, too short, pockets/lapels not taped down, poor crease in trousers), poor haircuts, incorrect rank, and outdated photos. Although photos are considered current if they are within the past five years, officers are encouraged to have a photo taken every three years and after each promotion.

Prepare for your photo session by properly preparing your uniform and having someone double check it. Don't be afraid to get the regulation out. Take someone with you to the photo lab to make sure you look good. Otherwise, you will have to depend upon the photographer, and he always has a lot of other things to do. Then, check your photo before it is forwarded. If at all

possible, get an extra copy and send it directly to Infantry Branch.

If you are a commander, you can help your officers in this area by requiring each to show you a copy of his photo. Look at the date of the last photo on his ORB. And don't hesitate to point out any errors.

Feedback from promotion and selection boards clearly indicates that boards use an officer's photograph to formulate opinions and make decisions. A current photo of high quality tells a board a great deal about an officer; it shows that officer has an interest in the results of the board. It is well worth any officer's time to make sure his photo presents the best possible image.

USAREC BATTALION COMMAND

The FY 1992 U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) selection board for battalion command will convene in September 1991 for assignment between January and June 1992. Officers who are interested should contact Infantry Branch as soon as possible to express their desire to compete and their preferences for location.

The battalions to be slated by this board are those in Los Angeles, CA; Denver, CO; Jacksonville, FL; Atlanta, GA; Des Moines, IA; Brunswick, ME; Minneapolis, MN; Jackson, MS; Kansas City, MO; Albuquerque, NM; Raleigh, NC; Cincinnati, OH; Philadelphia, PA; Columbia, SC; and Nashville, TN.

Infantry Branch must provide two former battalion commanders and four additional lieutenant colonels. Any officer who is interested should obtain the concurrence of his chain of command before volunteering for one of these assignments.

ROTC PMS BOARD

An ROTC Professor of Military Science (PMS) board is tentatively scheduled to meet in October 1991 to select officers to fill positions beginning in academic year 1992. Although a formal list of schools is not yet available,

positions requiring lieutenant colonels and majors are anticipated.

The primary requirements for PMS duty are a master's degree, a competitive assignment history, and at least two years time on station by the summer of 1992.

Interested officers should contact Infantry Branch for more information.

PROJECT JUMPSTART

Because of the important role the U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard play in the total Army mission, we send some of our best and brightest officers to the readiness groups, where they work to improve reserve component training and operational readiness.

The officers assigned to readiness groups provide a valuable link between the reserve forces and the Active Army in terms of current doctrine and training techniques. This relationship establishes a bond between the two components and reflects the nation's commitment to the Total Army concept.

Many officers have been assigned to readiness groups under Project Jumpstart. This program has increased the warfighting capability of the Reserve Components by assigning highly qualified captains and majors to serve as

advisors for two or three years.

Jumpstart officers who have had recent experience in computer simulation exercises or who have been through a rotation at one of the combat training centers are proving valuable to the Reserve Component commanders preparing to undergo this type of training.

As force modernization continues, Jumpstart officers are also conducting new equipment training, which is leading to more efficient equipment transitions.

Through their professionalism and dedication, these officers have a significant effect on the Army's operational readiness.

JOINT STAFF INTERN PROGRAM

The Joint Staff Intern Program gives a small number of junior officers of all services a chance to participate as action officers on the Joint Staff (JS) in support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) for periods of up to one year.

If you are interested, you must meet the following non-waivable requirements:

- Rank of captain. (You may be promotable provided you will not be

INFANTRY BATTALION COMMAND

As the Army's structure changes, the opportunity for lieutenant colonel level command decreases. Below are the

command opportunities projected for the Infantry category through the end of FY 1993.

Fifty-seven battalions are being slated in FY 1992, and we expect 58 battalions to be slated in FY 1993.

CENTRALLY SELECTED			
Mechanized	26	Motorized	3
Light	27	Training	34
Airborne	11	Special Troops	2
Air Assault	11	JSA	1
NOT CENTRALLY SELECTED			
UNIT	LOCATION	CHANGE OF COMMAND	
1st Bn, 1st Inf	USMA	June 1993	
TF Lion (BCT)	FL Jackson	June 1993	
1st Bn, 509 Inf (Abn)	JRTC	June 1993	

promoted to major during your one-year tenure.)

- Be eligible for a Top Secret/SCI security clearance. A Secret clearance is acceptable, pending a background investigation.

- Be an official nominee; that is, PERSCOM must have nominated you for consideration.

You need to be aware that, because this is a joint service assignment, the selection process is extremely competitive.

You begin this process by contacting Infantry Branch at PERSCOM and expressing your desires to your assignment officer. Although the assignment officer may not know when the next scheduled vacancy will occur, he can obtain this information from the Joint Management Office in PERSCOM. The Joint Staff J-1 continually requests nominations from the services and there is no good or bad time to request consideration. Keep in mind, too, that Infantry Branch must coordinate your follow-on assignment well in advance of any desired report date.

The assignment officer conducts a quick screen of your branch file to determine whether you meet the internal Infantry Branch and PERSCOM criteria for nomination. While these criteria are somewhat subjective and are not spelled out in any regulation, they have remained relatively constant through

the years and will serve as a useful benchmark in determining your competitiveness. As you review your Officer Record Brief (ORB) in preparation for calling Branch, consider the following criteria:

Manner of Performance. Performance may be the single most important factor in your competitiveness, and you can determine this by reviewing your OERs. Obviously, "top block" ratings with solid senior rater profiles make you competitive. The assignment officer can also give you an evaluation of this element and make recommendations.

Branch Qualification. Infantry Branch will verify that you are branch qualified and, if you are, will review your command OER to determine your manner of performance. This OER is significant in determining your competitiveness for the program as well as subsequent career milestones such as your promotion to major and selection for the resident Command and General Staff College (CGSC). If you have not commanded, the assignment officer will not nominate you for an intern position. Instead, he will suggest an assignment that will enable you to become branch qualified, and this is in your best interest.

Career Timeline. You must consider how an intern position will fit into your overall career timeline. Each officer has blocks of time in which to achieve career

goals — company command, CGSC (resident or nonresident), battalion XO or S-3 time, battalion command. The occurrence of these blocks varies depending on an officer's year group. The assignment officer is familiar with these "windows" and will advise you and make recommendations.

Follow-on Assignment. Your potential assignment after the one-year internship will be a consideration in determining your eligibility to compete. Unless you are already serving in the Washington area, the rules for time-on-station will mean that you will remain in Washington following the internship and likely work in your functional area in another agency or on the Army Staff.

Assuming you elect to compete for an internship and your assignment officer concurs, the next step is for Infantry Branch to forward your packet to the JMO for consideration. This packet consists of a cover sheet from your branch chief, your ORB, possibly a photograph, and your last five OERs. If the JMO concurs with the Branch recommendation, the packet will be forwarded through channels to the Joint Staff, J-1 for consideration. The J-1 will forward your packet to a directorate (J-3, J-5) for final consideration.

(This item was contributed by CPT Anthony R. Garrett, Springfield, Virginia.)

